

Mid-week Lenten Services 2021 (3/24/2021)

Welcome to this the last of our midweek virtual Lenten devotionals for 2021. The theme this year is, “What is Faith”?, a series focusing on the biblical figures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Israelites and finally Jesus as the “Perfecter and Pioneer” of our faith. Our primary scripture text is Hebrews 11-12.

A reminder that our congregation is meeting for worship this Sunday, the Sunday of the Passion; Palm Sunday, at 8 and 10:30 am. Sunday Church School for all ages begins at 9:15 am. We will meet in-person for Maundy Thursday Holy Communion April, 1 at 7 pm. and that is no April Fool! Our Good Friday Service is virtual. It will be ecumenical in nature and can be viewed at the website of United Churches of Lycoming County. Please refer to our webpage for a full schedule of Holy Week and Easter Sunday Worship.

Let us begin.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,+ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dialogue

P Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways, by the prophets,
C **but in these last days God has spoken to us by the Son.**
P The Son is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being
C **the Son sustains all things by the Word.**
P Since we have confidence by the new and living way opened for us by Jesus,
C **let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith.**

Opening Prayer

P Let us pray. O God our deliverer, you led your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.
C **Amen**

A Reading from Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:4-5

13See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— 15so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which

had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

4 Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

A Reading from Hebrews.....Hebrews 12:1-2

12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Reflection

The Prayers

P Faithful God, shower the world with your lovingkindness,

C that all may know your peace.

P Open our eyes to the needs of our neighbors,

C that all may know your love.

P Comfort the sick and dying,

C that all may know your mercy.

P Guide our leaders in the way of truth,

C that all may know your justice.

P Focus our hearts on the way of the cross,

C that all may have faith in you.

P Let us pray in the words of Martin Luther:

C Behold Lord, and empty vessel that needs to be filled.

My Lord, fill it. I am weak in the faith; strengthen me.

I am cold in love, warm me and make me fervent, that

my love may go out to my neighbor. I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and I am unable to trust you altogether.

O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you.

In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have. I am poor;

you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner;

you are upright. With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness. Therefore, I will remain with you, of whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give.

Amen

P Finally, let us pray with the words our Savior gave us:

C **Our Father, who art in heaven,**

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing

P The God of peace,

who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,

the great shepherd of the sheep,

make you complete in everything good

so that you may do God's will,

through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

C **Amen.**